

THE
Peoples Zeal Provok't
TO AN
Holy Emulation,
By the Pious and Instructive Example
of their dead
MINISTER:
OR A
Seasonable Memento to the Parishioners
of *Lavenham in Suffolk.*

BEING A
S E R M O N
Preached to that People, soon after the
Solemn Enterrment of their Reverend and
Pious Minister, *Mr. William Gurnall*;
Who Aged 63, Died *October 12. 1679.*

Heb. 11. 4. Abel being dead, yet speaketh.

Σιγῶν πλεον δὴναται ὁ Ἀβελὶς τῶν πλεον λαλόντων, Ignat. Epist. ad Phil.

And now at their request made publick, by *William Burkiſt, M. A.*
of *Pembroke Hall in Cambridge*, and Rector of *Malden in Suffolk.*

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THE
People's Zeal Provoked

Holy Emulation

MINISTERS

14-202

SEVEN

Preached to the People, 1800, at the

Second Annual Meeting of the

Massachusetts Convention

of the American People

and the Friends of the

Revolutionary Cause

in the City of New York

on the 14th of May, 1800

Printed by A. W. Leake, at the Office of the

Massachusetts Convention

To my Honoured Friend

Mr^s Sarah Gurnall, the sorrowful Relict
of Mr William Gurnal, late of Laven-
ham deceased; and to the rest of the
surviving Inhabitants of that Town.

THAT I appeared no sooner in the Croud
of Mourners, to condole with you in your
publick loss; it was because I would not
rudely disturb the motions of so just a
sorrow. It hath been long observed, that during
the prevalency of excessive grief, the soul hath no
leisure to attend to those advices; which (when the
floods of sorrow are a little dried up) are not on-
ly seasonable but advantagious. May what is here
then, modestly presented to your impartial view, be
like the Rod of Moses to divide the waters of sor-
row, or like the Mantle of Elijah to restrain those
floods of your immoderate grief, which will be too rea-
dy to overflow their banks, if Reason and Religion
do not prevent by a seasonable interposure. But I
am very willing to persuade my self that Almighty
God hath wrought your hearts to such a chearful
temper, as may give an obedient welcom to this so

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Smarting an affliction; that even whilst you weep, you may yet smile upon the Rod of your Heavenly Father, whose stripes you do so tenderly suffer; and enabled you also to bring your minds to a willing and contented acquiescency in the wisdom of divine appointments: how cross and contradictory soever they may seem to rebellious nature. 'Tis easie indeed for those whose bones are full of marrow, to be joyful, but for the bones which God hath broken to rejoyce, is questionless the praise of Divine Mercy; to be not only patient, but praiseful under so severe and killing a dispensation, is certainly the highest pitch of Christian Fortitude; to smile upon affliction, and under its severest pressures, to sing when others shriek, will eminently bespeak you a singular pattern of holy chearfulness.

Yet withall understand and know, that the ingenuity of Christianity doth allow you to express your sorrowful resentments of the absence and loss of your useful Friend: and it is a truth by the common consent of all mankind acknowledged, that there is no burthen so absolutely intolerable to humane nature, as the death and separation of those whom Gods Honourable Ordinance hath conjoynd and made one, the bonds of Matrimonial Love, being stronger than those of Nature. How often have we seen men of noble and gallant spirits, able to scorn injuries, and bravely to conquer, yea to revenge themselves upon the base attempts of malice; by not vouchsafing so much as to take any notice of them: yet how have their generous minds been disconsolately dejected, when the doleful tidings of their Relations death have first surprized them? The victori-

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our David, who was no whit astonish'd at the great Goliaths valour, nor his Attendants rage, but with an undaunted resolution (though but a Stripling) encounters with him, and utterly overthrows him; yet when the sad and sudden news came of the death of his beloved Jonathan, sorrow like a thick Cloud sat upon his Countenance, and the bitter anguish of his painful soul constrained him to cry out, I am distressed. 2 Sam. 1. 26.

Yea, the holy Jesus, that grand exemplar of piety, who always submitted to his Fathers will in all things, and therefore could never be subject to the corroding thoughts of discontent, yet he by his own practice, shew'd the propensity of our natures to grief and sorrow, for the loss of those whom we highly value and dearly love; he himself passionately weeping when his beloved Lazarus lay asleep in the silent dormitory of the Grave, and the chorus of Mourners stood lamenting him. St. Joh. 11. 35.

Christian Religion doth not destroy humane passions and natural affections, which were originally planted in innocent nature, and were afterwards found in Christs spotless nature; yea so far are they from being sinful, that they are highly useful when kept (as they ought to be) under the Lock and Key of Reason: then it is that our passions become unlawful, when they become excessive, and grow impatient of restraint by the superiour powers and faculties of mans soul, when the dictates of reason prevail nothing, but the Prince Lackeys after the Servant, and passion usurps the Throne, whose place is no higher than the Foot-stool.

Thus

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Gen. 37. 35.

Thus I observe good Jacob guilty of too much indulgence to his natural affection, when he sorrowfully cries out like a man resolved to exasperate his own miseries, I will go down into the grave, unto my Son mourning: for the truth is, as the excess of any passion is sinful and injurious, so immoderate sorrow is particularly hurtful to the living, and dishonourable to the dead; neither is it an argument of more Love, but an evidence of less Grace.

Gen. 50. 3. &
10. compared.

You may please to remark the difference between the Egyptians mourning, and Josephs for his Father Jacob; they mourned seventy days for the old Patriarch, he but seven days for his own Father: What! Did Heathenism outdo Religion? or had strangers more natural affection than his own Bowels? I hope not so. But Josephs piety prevails above his passion, and the certain knowledge of his holy Fathers joyful resurrection (which they were ignorant wholly of) administred more matter of comfort, than his death could occasion sorrow. Joseph knew that immoderate Tears were the prodigality of affection; he knew the unprofitableness as well as the impiety of a sullen sorrow; he knew that could he have melted himself into tears or by weeping have occasioned a second Deluge, yet all would have been in vain. Orpheus in the Ethnick Mythology could make Trees and Stones dance after the Musick of his Harmonious Lute, yet could not with all his Melodious Harmony reduce his deceased Friends from the power of the Grave: for the house of death is like the Lyons Cave, from whence there are no returning Foot-steps.

Seeing

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Seeing then that the Supreme Majesty (whose paths are in the labyrinths of Unsearchable Wisdom, and whose footsteps are like the track of a mighty ship in the over-swelling Ocean, past finding out) hath by the late issue of his Providence declared his will, it is most reasonable that this declaration of Gods will should satisfactorily determine yours: for remember that when God rings changes in a Town, he well knows how to make Musick thereby to his own Glory: and in the intervals of passion, let me beg of you to consider, that a just and pious imitation of his holy example, whom God hath removed from you, is the important duty which now lies incumbent upon you, with a persevering diligence to perform.

To Inform and Convince you how highly accountable you are to almighty God, both for the long enjoyment of his Ministry, and also for the happy advantage of his example, is the honest design of the following Sermon: and also to let this censorious age, (in which some persons are so overgrown with the Anti-Episcopal Jaundice, that their Eye can see nothing in a Conformist, but what is discoloured and of a different tincture) understand and know that you had a Conformist for your Minister, who rendred solid Religion amiable, by a Conversation in all things worthy of it; who did by a Regular Piety, a strict Sobriety, a Catholick and diffusive Charity, render Religion venerable to the world; one whose whole time, strength and parts, were piously devoted to God and his sacred Service.

Moses, I observe, was in one particular privileged by God above all other holy persons: their souls (in common with his) at death have Angels for their

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Convoy towards the Mansions of Bliss and Glory : but he had an Angel for his Sexton, who buried his Body in an unknown place, lest the Israelites should superstitiously Idolize and adore it : There would be no fear at all of any such offensive adoration on your part, were I able (as indeed I am not) to draw to the life the fair Effigies of your absent Minister, who was, like Moses, faithful in all Gods house whilst he lived, and not unlike him at his death ; his meek soul gliding from him in a fine imperceptible vehicle, and he dying as the modern Jews by tradition tell us Moses did, ad Nutum Dei, & Osculo Oris ejus, at Gods beck, and as it were with a kiss of Gods mouth ; It was no more betwixt God and them but this, Go up and dye.

To conclude then, May all your practices appear to the world in a faithful compliance with what was truly imitable and praise-worthy in him. May the living Example of your dead Minister, be exemplified in the lives of you his People. May you daily dress by his Glass, and walk in his pious and devout Foot-steps. May you all meet him with astonishing Joy, and behold him also with unutterable delight and comfort in the day of your great Audit, this is and ever shall be the hearty and affectionate supplication of

Mildn, Decemb.
16. 1679.

Your sympathizing Friend
and Servant,

William Burkitt.

Heb.

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H E B. xiii. 7.

*Remember them that have the rule over you ;
who have spoken to you the word of God ,
whose faith follow, considering the end of
their Conversation.*

However at the first appearance , the Text may seem not unfitly acommodated to the sad and sorrowful circumstances, in which you the People of this place do at present stand ; yet it is no part of my intention by the reading of these words to exasperate your grief, or revive your sorrow for the loss of your truly Reverend, and lately deceased Watchman ; but rather to moderate and regulate your just sorrow for him, whom without weeping eyes it had been a sin in you to part with. That People have a hard and dry

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haert indeed that can part with Gods Prophets without tears. Physicians tell us, that if Rheum be sweetned it cannot hurt the Lungs; sure I am, if sorrow be sanctified, it cannot hurt the heart, nor prejudice the soul: now that your sorrow may be such, it is my design in appearing here at your request this day, to call you off from mourning for him, who wants neither the benefit nor benevolence of your Tears, to a just imitation of him; to transcribe his excellent pattern, in fair and legible Characters in your own lives.

How lovely was that copy of Religion which he set before you in his dayly Conversation! So forcible was the Majesty of that holiness that shined forth in him, that it did extort a veneration from its most violent Opposers; and so convictive also, that it pierced the very Consciencés of his Enemies, and constrained them whom prejudice only had made his Foes, tacitly to acknowledge that God was in him of a Truth. Know then that 'tis a poor and low evidence of your respects to him, should you go with *Mary* to your dear friends Sepulchre, and there bedew his Coffin with your Tears: the highest demonstration of your ardent love to him, and of your unbounded and inexpressible gratitude to God for him, is to take up his exemplary graces, by a Christian imitation, and to mourn more passionately that you are so unlike him, than that you have at present lost him; that all your long converses with him should no more assimilate you to his own likeness.

Think

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Think it not, I beseech you, a sufficient and suitable return to almighty God, for five and thirty years enjoyment of his ministerial labours, to follow his *Herse* to the Grave with a sigh and a groan: believe it, God expects somewhat more at your hands for such a mercy, than all this comes to; if you shall forget to obey his Counsels, if you shall neglect to follow his example; not only the dust of his feet whilst alive, but the very ashes of his Grave now dead, will sadly appear as a judicial testimony against you in the day of your account.

What, is this all you can afford, to sprinkle a tear upon the *Herse* of so faithful a servant of Christ and of your souls? have you nothing but a few briny drops wherewith to preserve and perpetuate his excellent memory beyond his Urn? will you suffer this burning and shining light, which was so signal an Ornament to the Candlestick it so long stood in, to go out in silence like a Glow-worm at the Hedges bottom, with no greater noise than you make with your Eyes? I hope not so, but rather that you will remember him that so long had the Ministerial Rule over you, who hath so often with an indefatigable industry and laborious diligence spoken to you the word of God, whose faith it is your highest wisdom perseveringly to follow, considering the blessed end of his Christian conversation.

In a word, I hope you will honour and hear him as long as ever he preaches to you, and then I am sure you will not fail to do so still, for with righteous *Abel*, he being dead, yet speaketh;

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eth; yea dead as well as living he is still your Preacher, his Shroud and Coffin are his Pulpit, his Grave and Tomb-stone are his Temple, and he still preaches to you, though he lies in silence before you and utters never a word, I mean by his pious and most instructive example left among you, and by that fair character and good report, which he hath so deservedly obtained with you: upon which account, allow me, I pray, the liberty to bespeak you freely in the words of the great Apostle now read unto you, *Remember them that have the Rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God; whose faith follow considering the end of their Conversation.*

Which words contain the Apostles advice to the Christian *Hebrews*, and in them to all succeeding Christians, how to manage their deportment toward their Ecclesiastical Governors, whom God by death or persecution at any time removes from them; and that is, first ever to preserve their name and memory fresh among them as a precious treasure, *Remember them that have the Rule over you*: Secondly, to propound their holy conversation to their daily view, in a Christian imitation of those Evangelical graces and Moral virtues, which were so orient and exemplary in their Rulers lives, *whose faith follow.*

In the words you have four particulars observable.

1. The

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1. The Persons exhorted, the Church of God; unto whom he mercifully affords the honour and happiness of a Spiritual Guide and Ruler.

2. The Duty exhorted to, and that is two-fold. (1.) To embalm their names with a precious memory, *remember them, &c.* (2.) To imitate their Christian Example, and transcribe it impartially into their own lives; *whose faith follow.*

3. Here is the pattern propounded to the Christians imitation; or the persons described whom we ought thus to imitate and follow, and they are our Spiritual Rulers, described here to us by a double character; (1.) By their Ministerial Office; *who have spoken unto you the word of God.* (2.) By their Ministerial Power, which they exercise by vertue of that Office, and that is to rule and govern the Flock committed by Christ to their care and charge; *Remember them that have the Rule over you.*

4. Here is the Argument and Motive which the Apostle makes use of, to excite and quicken a People to this commendable imitation of their Spiritual Rulers, and that is drawn from the happy conclusion which they make, when they have finished their testimony at death; they go off the publick Stage with honour and applause: this I conceive lies coucht and comprehended in the last words, *Considering the end of their Conversation.*

The strait limits of our time will not permit a distinct handling of all the foregoing particulars. I shall therefore propound one general

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ral note to your observance, which (as I conceive) is the principal intendment of the Text. Take it thus;

Note.

That it is the standing Duty of that people, whom God hath honoured with the long enjoyment of a Spiritual Guide and Ruler, perseveringly to follow his Faith, and to imitate his exemplary Conversation.

The original word *μιμούμενοι*, which we translate to follow and imitate, doth not simply signifie to remark and observe anothers actions, but to perform a work according to example and pattern: a Metaphor as some conceive borrowed from Theatres, where the Stage-players study with the greatest accuracy and exactness, to express the gestures and dispositions of those persons, whom they design to personate and represent: to the faithful exercise of which industrious care, doth the Apostle exhort all Christians, in their imitation of those whom God hath set over them, in whatever was truly exemplary and praise-worthy in them; when here he bids us *follow their Faith*.

If you will consult the sacred Scriptures, you will find this Duty frequently recommended to, and as highly commended in the Christian; observe how strictly it is recommended to our practice, 1 Cor. 11. 1. *Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ*: note also how the performance of this Duty is commended by the same Apostle, 1 Thess. 1. 6. *Ye became followers of us, and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, &c.* that is (as I humbly conceive)
ye

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ye followed us with a resolute perseverance in the same thorny path of persecution and affliction for the Gospel sake, in which we before you had traced the Foot-steps of the suffering Jesus.

For the more distinct and methodical handling of the Note propounded, I shall attempt to give you a satisfactory resolution to these two inquiries.

1. I shall inquire how and after what manner are a People concerned, to imitate and follow the pattern and example of their Spiritual Rulers.

2. From what Motives, and upon what Considerations are they obliged so to do.

1. Inquiry; How and after what manner ought a people to imitate and follow their Ministerial Rulers?

To this I shall return a double Answer.

1. Negative: The best of Ministers being but men at the best, therefore their peoples imitation of them and their Example must not be an universal but a limited imitation; with this just caution the great Apostle Saint Paul propounded his own example to the *Corinthians* view; *be ye followers of me, as I also am of Christ*; as if he had said, If at any time you find me your Spiritual Guide stepping aside, and walking unanswerable to that uniform pattern of obedience which the holy Jesus set before both me and you in his own holy and immaculate life, take heed that you decline my example, and follow not my foot-steps.

1 Cor. 11. 1.

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Indeed

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2 Sam. 11. 2.

Indeed the Doctors of the Romish Synagogue do peremptorily oblige their followers to believe whatever they (as infallible Dictators) propound to them, be it never so unreasonable; and to practise also whatever they set in example before them, be it never so ridiculous and absurd. Verily they impose the same ignominious terms upon the people of their Communion, which *Nahash* once offered to the men of *Jabesh-gilead*, that every one shall put out his right Eye (Reason) that so they may be the more fit for their blind devotion; yea both Eyes if the Church command it; the Eye of Sense too must at least be disbelieved, otherwise that grand affront to humane nature the doctrine of Transubstantiation had never obtained credence in the world.

But blessed be God your Ministers have more integrity, than thus magisterially to impose either upon your belief or upon your practice. We charitably warn you of your danger, if you try not both our Doctrine and our Manners, by the infallible touchstone of the Holy Scriptures, before you believe the one or imitate the other. We freely acknowledge, and impartially confess that we are men of like passions and infirmities with your selves, and as obnoxious to error through ignorance, as we are to sin through infirmity.

You are not then, you see, either commanded by God, or encouraged by us, to imitate and follow your spiritual Guides universally, and in all things: but with a due restriction and
just

just limitation, you are to follow your Ministers no further than they follow their infallible Minister, Christ Jesus.

2. Positively. A peoples imitation of their Preachers exemplary Pattern ought to have this threefold signature instampt and imprest upon it.

1. It ought to be a regular and uniform imitation; you are not to follow him universally in all his actions, but in the impartial exercise of all his graces; this Counsel the holy Apostle gives, Phil. 4. 8. *Whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, praise or comeliness* in his Actions, those things you must think upon. Remember to follow your Spiritual Guide in that even path of piety, wherein he hath uprightly followed the Captain of your salvation. Hypocrisie singles out one grace and shuns another, but sincerity discovers it self by an uniform care and endeavour to transcribe all, and doth nothing by partiality.

2. It must be a vigorous and industrious imitation: indeed to imitate sinners in an evil way, requires no great pains, in regard of the natural vent and tendency of our natures to sin and vanity; as also in regard of the pronity of the Tempter to sollicit and invite forth our innate corruption into act and exercise. But to follow a Christian in what is eminently good, requires a vigorous intention of mind; and all the superiour faculties of our souls must be employed industriously in that noble exercise: here

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our understandings must be exercised to discover the radiant excellency of those Christian Graces which shine forth in others : here must our judgements be employed to discover by the light of Scripture and Reason, what is to be chosen, and what to be eschewed in the Pattern we propound to follow : here our affections also must be concerned in taking a daily pleasure and delight, to hold with an unwearied hand the Glass of their holy lives continually before us, the better to dress our Souls by it. Certainly to perform all this, requires a soul fortified with courage, and armed with such an impregnable resolution, as no difficulties can dismay or vanquish.

3. It ought to be a constant and persevering imitation: be always endeavouring to keep your Ministers example fresh in memory, and make this duty your daily work and constant practice. So much, I conceive, is implied in that Apostolical injunction, Heb. 6. 12. *Be ye followers of them, who through faith and patience inherit the promises*: that is, follow the Saints with the same Christian patience, and persevering faith, with which they inherit the glorious accomplishment of all the promises.

Having thus briefly shewn you how, and after what manner a People are obliged to follow the Religious foot-steps of their exemplary Guides, The

2. Inquiry followeth, *viz.* from what Motives, and upon what Considerations they are concerned thus to do.

To,

To which I answer, A People lye under a threefold obligation to this Duty, *viz.* in regard of God, in relation to themselves, and in reference to their Ministers.

1. In regard of God, Because this is one of his principal ends in bestowing such gracious qualifications upon his Ministers; yea, Gods great design in sending his Messengers amongst a people, is, that by the holiness of their example, as well as by the purity of their Doctrine, they may win souls to a love of Righteousness: this is the Duty which *Timothy* is exhorted to, when the Apostle bids him hold forth the word of life; that is, the purity of it in his Doctrine, and the power of it in his Conversation: from hence, no doubt, it is that Christ compares his Apostles to lights, *ye are the light of the world*: an allusion (as may be probably conjectured) to Torches held out in a dark night, to direct Passengers their way; or to fires upon a Beacon near the Sea-coast, to prevent the bewildered Mariners splitting upon Rocks, and suffering Shipwrack. Believe it, God doth not only bestow his graces upon his Ministers for their own sakes, to qualify them for their future happiness and glory, but he designs also your advantage by those endowments; so that a people do apparently sin against the great end and purpose of Gods love and kindness, in sending his Ambassadors among them; if they do not fruitfully improve their Religious Example set before them: for verily your Ministers gifts are a talent, for which you, as well as they, are responsible to God: yea, you

Mat. 5. 14.

are.

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are as highly accountable to God for the Holy Example they set before you, as you are for that sacred *Depositum*, the doctrine of faith, I mean, which they deliver to you.

2. In relation to your selves: Without a Christian imitation of the steadfastness of their faith, and the exemplariness of their conversation, whom God hath set over you, and made patterns of solid piety unto you; that which was your mercy and privilege in the enjoyment, will apparently tend to the dreadful aggravation of your sin, and the eternal heightning of your account. St. *Paul* in his famous funeral Oration for the Saints departed, *Hebrews 11.* tells us of *Noah*, *verse 5.* that he condemned the world, which no doubt he did by his practice, as well as by his preaching: indeed he preached by his hand as well as with his tongue; his building of the Ark was a daily visible Sermon to that unreclaimable generation: with what scoffing derision did the old world laugh at *Noah* for his Ark, and tell one another in sport, that too much holiness had made the old man mad: and that all the alarms of a flood approaching, were but the idle dreams of the doting Prophet? yet his example not followed, brought vengeance upon that people to extremity.

Think then of this all you the people of this place, who have so long enjoyed a Preacher of Righteousness among you, and all that while have found him a faithful witness from God unto you; for not receiving his testimony, you must expect to find him another day an eternal witness for God

God against you. Believe it timely, if you be not awakened to a fruitful contention of being like him, in all that was truly imitable and praise-worthy in him, verily your sins would not have been accented with such an aggravated guilt (as they will then be) had you never known him.

3. A people are obliged thus perseveringly to follow the holy example of their Spiritual Guides, with a reference unto them; and that in two respects.

1. In that your Christian imitation of their instructive example will conduce very much to make up their loss, and render them less mist and wanted in the world. I doubt not but many of you are justly sensible of the severity of that stroke, which the hand of Almighty God hath given your Town in your late Ministers death; yet think not, I pray, your loss irreparable; for be assured it is very much within the compass of your power, to repair and make up your own loss: stand but you all up, and appear in your distinct and several capacities for God (as he did) by a publick owning of his ways and worship; fill you up the breach made by the death of him with your gracious influence, and his absence will be the better born. It is very observable what our dying Saviours comfort was upon the bed of his Cross; next to the supports of the divine presence, this revived his soul that he had a Seed in the world which should stand up and appear for God; after his departure; Psal. 22. 30. *My seed shall serve him;* as if
our

our Lord had said, Although I am taking my final farewell of this world, yet I shall leave a spiritual generation behind me, that will carry on my Fathers work in the world, and build up my spiritual kingdom, when I shall be at rest. And I am sure it did not a little conduce to the support of your dying Ministers spirit, when he had death before him in immediate prospect, to hope upon good grounds that he (as a Spiritual Father) should leave many Children behind him, to carry on the work of Christ in the world, when his head should be laid among the clouds.

2. In as much as your Christian care to imitate your Ministers pattern, will be the best and fullest commendation you can bestow upon their person; it is indeed no less the duty, than the commendation of a people, to embalm the names of their dead Ministers with a precious memory, who have worn out amongst them with use, and not with rust; equity as well as ingenuity requires this, that when they are in Heaven, they should live in their good name on earth, as when they were on earth, they lived by their good heart in Heaven. Yet withal I crave leave to interpose a double caution.

1. That your highest commendations and praises of them without a Christian endeavour to exemplifie and imitate whatever you observed praise-worthy in them, is but an unprofitable complement, of no more fragrantcy, than a handful of Flowers which the innocent Child strows upon its Parents grave, which make the Corps smell not at all the sweeter. Nay,

2. To

2. To commend and not to imitate, is not only disingenuity but hypocrisie, not only bare complement, but which is far worse, 'tis self-condemnation; for if you do believe that to be truly excellent in your Minister which you commend him for, why do you then not imitate it? if you apprehend it not excellent, why do you then commend it? so that thy tongue doth either bely thy heart, or else thy life doth contradict thy tongue. To cure which vanity, apply your selves to an industrious following of what the word of God and your own Consciences tell you did deserve your notice; and let your own works, as well as his, praise him in the gate.

The Application.

From all that hath been spoken I infer,

1. That it is no less than our obliged duty to bless almighty God with hearty gratulation and praise, for the pious lives, and exemplary deaths, of such whom his divine grace hath made patterns of holiness to us in the world. Certainly to bless his holy name for all his Saints and Servants departed this life in his faith and fear, is so far from smelling of the rank superstition of the Church of Rome (as some have weakly thought) that it is matter of positive duty to express our thankfulness for such excellent helps to further us in our way towards Heaven. Precepts may be dark and obscure, but precepts exemplified are plain and facil: the holy example of de-

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parted

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parted Saints afford us a double help in running our Christian Race.

1. As they assure us that whatever the Gospel requires at our hands, is a possible attainment; the same assistance that enabled them, stands ready to succour us: so that the poor and little excuses of difficulty and impossibility in what the Gospel enjoyns, are hereby obviated, whilst we behold those vertues and graces flourishing in others, with an happy facility, from which we would excuse our selves upon those weak pretences.

2. In that examples do inspirit us, with life and vigour. *Miltiades* his victories would not suffer *Themistocles* to sleep: so highly did the success of the one animate and inflame the zeal of the other. Bless we God then for that cloud of Witnesses, (with the great Apostle) which doth at once both encourage our endeavours, and also assure us of success.

Heb. 12. 1.

3. Inference. I next infer from what hath been already offered, how exact and circumspect the Ministers of Christ ought, and are obliged to be in that example which they daily set before their people. O how highly are we all concerned to oblige our selves to an eminent and exemplary piety of conversation! the Reason is obvious, because the eyes of all our Flock not only are, but ought to be upon us: our mistakes then, are not like the errors of a Pocket-watch, which mislead only a single person, but like those of a Town Clock, which misguides a multitude.

titude. What a strange curiosity and holyness was there in the election of those who were under the Law admitted to serve at the Altar; if there were the least blemish in the Head, Eye, Hand or Foot, they were forthwith excluded from those Levitical administrations; if there were not an exact symmetry of parts, they must not set a foot upon the floor of the holy place. What, think you, was the Gospel of that Ceremonial Rite but this, to intimate and signify that inward purity of heart, and unspotted innocency of life which Almighty God expects in the Evangelical Priesthood. Certainly the Spiritual blemishes of Gods immediate Servants under the Gospel, are not a less eye-sore to the Divine Purity, than those Legal imperfections, which did deny the Sons of Aaron an allowed access to Gods Altar, during the Ceremonial Law. Consider we then, that our actions have an aptitude to make a deeper impression upon the minds of our people, than our words: Those that do forget our Doctrine, will be sure to remember our example, at least so far, as to produce it boldly by way of Apology for themselves, when they walk in any path of Impiety and disorder. *Theophylact* in his commentary upon those words, *Christ opened his mouth and taught*, makes this Query, whether the first words were not superfluous; he answers No, because,

Lev. 21. 17,
18, 19.

Mat. 5. 2.

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cause, although Christ, when he opened his mouth taught, yet he did teach, when he did not open his mouth; viz. (*id est sic*) by his life; so then there is a preaching life as well as a preaching doctrine: if Religion be taught by the first but not by the second, we sadly disappoint the end of what is spoken; and thus *Penelope* like, what we do in the day we may undo in the night, in works of darkness. Yet let it not be inferred from hence, that the Ministers unworthiness doth make void his Office, and evacuate his Commission; for the efficacy of the sacred Function depends not upon our dignity, but on the energy of Divine Grace: yet as to his own soul it renders all his labours fruitless. Admit his Doctrine be sound; yet an Heterodox Conversation will carry an Orthodox Judgement to Hell. In a word, though like a crackt Bell he may be instrumental to ring others to Heaven, yet for himself there is no remedy, but to the fire he must go, either for his refining or his condemnation. To conclude this, the Throne and the Pulpit, above all places call for holiness: the Prince and the Preacher, above all persons, are most accountable to God for their Example.

3. Inference. I infer from hence in the last place how signal your obligations are to Almighty God for the long enjoyment of that exemplary pattern of all true piety and ver-

tue.

tue (your deceased Minister I mean) whom (for your sins I fear) he hath lately taken from you. Shew now your obedience to God, your respects to him, your kindness and charity to your own souls, by a zealous and faithful care to transcribe impartially in your own lives whatever was truly imitable in your Ministers. And not to carry you beyond the confines of the Text, let me earnestly bespeak your Christian compliance with a double duty here enjoined.

1. To follow his faith.

2. To imitate his exemplary conversation:

1. Follow his faith, and that in a double respect, in the soundness of his faith, and in the steadfastness of his faith:

1. Follow him in the soundness of his faith. The faith which he perseveringly professed, and taught, was that Doctrine which is according to Godliness; that faith which owns God for its immediate Author, and the Scripture for its infallible Rule: the faith that was once delivered to the Saints; which is not the result of phantasie and imagination; but the product of an eternal Counsel, which was confirmed by the miracles, and sealed with the blood of a Saviour. In a word, that faith which he so zealously taught, had sure footing in the holy Scriptures. When-ever he propounded any truth which required not only the assent of your understandings, but also
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the obedience and adoration of your faith, he constantly shewed you the Canon of the Scriptures for its confirmation. If any then (which God forbid) should appear after him in this place, and attempt the proselyting of you to another Gospel, or to any new doctrine of faith foreign to the Scriptures, should he pretend to the authority of a commissioned Angel from Heaven, let him be held accursed.

2. Follow him in the stedfastness of his faith. The same rule of faith which he laid before you at his first coming amongst you, he lived and preached by to the day of his death: and this I take the greater liberty to assert, because some persons have not blusht to tell the world publickly, that since his conformity to the discipline of the Church, he had apostatized and revolted from that faith which he had formerly profest and taught; but be ye all assured, that as to the great fundamentals of Faith and Religion he was ever the same, and what he taught you to his last breath, I doubt not but he stood ready to confirm and seal with his blood, even in the fiercest flames of martyrdom, if God had called him to that fiery trial.

2. Imitate his Christian Conversation. My meaning is, exemplifie those Evangelical Graces and Christian Vertues in your lives, which did so oriently shine forth in his. To propound a few:

1. His

1. His Eminent Humility. This was the garment which covered all his excellent accomplishments, although indeed their beauty was rendered more conspicuous and amiable by casting this veil over it. Oh what mean thoughts had he of himself! and was not only content, but desirous also that others should have so too: no man ever expressed so low a value of his worth and merits as himself did. Every thing in others that was good, he admired as excellent, whilst the same or better in himself, he thought not unworthily contemned: his Eyes were full of his own deficiencies and others perfections. In a word, he was a lowly Valley, sweetly planted, well watered, richly fruitful; imitate him then herein, and by a holy emulation study to excel him in this adorning Grace; and for your help herein recollect what you heard from him in his elaborate Discourses among you upon Phil. 2. 5. *Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus*, this humble mind.

2. His extensive Love: this grace did variously exert it self.

1. His love to God, he loved him exceedingly, whom he could not love excessively, having such high and raised apprehensions of his Makers excellencies, as caused him to judge his prime and best affections unworthy to be placed upon so Divine an Object.

2. His

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2. His Love to the holy Jesus : this was such a Seraphick and Divine fire in his soul, as did marvellously consume his love to the world and all sublunary comforts. You are witnesses, and all that knew him, in how eminent a measure and degree the world was crucified unto him, and he unto the world, by the Cross of Christ.

3. His love to souls; this was it, no doubt, that made him so indefatigable both in his Study and the Pulpit; from hence it was, that the Throne of Grace, his Study, the Pulpit and his sick Neighbours, had the whole of his time divided amongst them, and devoted to them.

4. His unbounded love to all Christians, though they differed in their sentiments from him: he loved Christians for their Christianity, and did adore the Image of his Saviour where-ever he saw it in any of his members, unhappily persecuting one another with hard names and characters of reproach. How often did he publickly deplore and bewail, that the greatest measure of love that is found at this day amongst the professors of the Cross, was not true Christian love, but only love of a party! Follow him then in the impartial exercise of this grace, and for your help therein remember what he taught you from Eph.

5. 2. *And walk in love as Christ also hath loved us*; and as you have any regard for the

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Author of your profession, take heed that a spirit of Division (now) crowd not in among you: your unity is your strength as well as your beauty; persist therefore, I beseech you, in that Christian Order amongst your selves, in which it was his great ambition all his days to preserve and keep you. Timely oppose the crafty design of the subtle Adversary of souls, who will take this occasion (if possible) now the Spiritual Parent is out of the way, to set the Children together by the ears.

3. His diffusive Charity: his Alms were as exuberant as his Love: misery and want where-ever he met them, did sufficiently endear their objects to him; he was none of those that hide their faces from the Poor, nor of the number of them, who satisfy their Consciences with a single exercise of their Charity once a year, but daily were the emanations of his Bounty. Yet although he cast the seeds of his Charity upon all sorts of ground, he sowed them thickest upon Gods enclosure; my meaning is, he did good unto all, *but especially to those that were of the Household of Faith.* Make him herein, and his example the pattern of your daily imitation; for the world which is chained together by intermingled love, will soon shatter and fall in pieces if Charity shall once fail and dye: and for your better help herein,

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call over those potent Arguments for the exercise of this Evangelical Duty, which he urged upon you, from that Apostolical injunction, Heb. 13. 16. *But to do good, and to communicate forget not, for with such Sacrifices God is well pleased.*

4. His persevering diligence and faithfulness in his place and station. You could not but observe, that his whole disposal of himself was to perpetual industry and service; he not only avoided idleness, but seemed to have a forcible antipathy against it, and was often recommending it to you with great concern and vigour in his publick advices, to be always furnished with somewhat to do; *ut te inveniat semper Diabolus occupatum*, that the Devil may never find thee at leisure to listen to his temptations, as St. Hierom adviseth. The idle mans brain being, in truth, not only the Devils Shop, but his Kingdom too, a Model of, and an Appendage unto Hell; a place (like that) given up to torture and mischief. As to himself, his chiefest recreation was variety of work; for beside those portions of time, which the necessities of nature, and of civil life extorted from him, there was not a minute of the day which he left vacant. Now to extimulate your zeal to a pious imitation of him herein also; let me admonish you to ruminate upon those accurate Sermons you heard from him.

him upon St. Mat. 20. 6. *Why stand ye here all the day idle?*

5. His tender sympathie with the afflicted Church of Christ. Like a true son of Zion he could not rejoyce when his Mother mourned, he daily felt as much by sympathy as he did by sense; and no wonder, for he that hath a stock going in the Churches Ship, cannot but lament and quake at every storm: Oh how frequent were his enquiries after her, how fervent were his prayers for her, how bowelly and compassionate were his mournings over her! The deplorable condition of the Church and Nation lay exceeding near his heart, both living and dying; he preferring their happiness and welfare above his chief joy. Now in order to your attaining the same Christ-like temper with him, frequently meditate upon what you heard from him, upon *Nehemiah* 1. 4. where the sympathizing Prophet refuseth to drink wine, when the afflicted Church drank water.

6. And lastly, to sum up all, imitate him in his daily care and endeavour to live Religion in all his capacities. As a Minister, ye are Witnesses, and God also, how faithfully, how conscientiously he discharged his duty towards you. In the exercise of his Ministerial Function, if censure it self be able to tax him for any neglect, it must be in no more frequent visiting his Flock, from which

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nothing but a weak body kept him, not a proud or unwilling mind; the obstruction he met with in this part of his Duty from his tender habit of body (which would not suffer him so frequently to perform it as he desired) was his great sorrow both living and dying; yet having this to comfort him, that the frailty of his body was his affliction, but not his sin. Consider him in his next relative Capacity, as a Child, how dutiful and obsequious! O how great was that tribute of veneration and respect which he constantly paid to the hoary hairs of his aged Parents! As a Husband, how tender and compassionate; as a Parent, how indulgent and affectionate; as a Minister, how kind and munificent! Thus was he universally good in all stations, and liv'd Religion in very capacity. And if you desire to imitate him here, in also, as becomes you, dress then your souls by that Glass daily, which his dying hand last held up before your Eyes, I mean by Heavenly meditation, make those useful truths your own, which you last heard from him upon Titus 2. 12. *That denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously and godly in this present world:* Which Christian Lesson, if it shall be as practically learnt by you, as it was faithfully taught by him; I will be bold to say thus much in the singular commendation of you his People,

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ple, that you will thereby give the world a convictive instance, that this age hath Vertues as stupendious as its Vices.

The Conclusion.

Thus I have given my self the satisfaction of doing my Duty, in propounding your Ministers example to your Christian view. Let none censoriously say, I have been all this while painting the Prophets Sepulchre. No, but describing the Prophet himself, and with this single and sincere intention, that you may timely know, you have had a Prophet of the Lord among you; a person that had (*omnia in se sempiterna præter corpusculum*) all things living and lasting to eternity except his body, which was the only thing he had subject to mortality, and besides which, nothing of him doth see corruption. 'Twill be below the merit of his person, as well as the greatness of our loss, to celebrate his death in womanish complaints, or indeed by any verbal lamentations; nor can any thing beseem his memory but what is Sacred and Divine, as his Writings are. May his just fame from them, and from his virtues, be precious to all succeeding ages; and when Elegies committed to the trust of Marble, shall be as illegible as if they had been writ in Water, when all stately Pyramids shall
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be dissolved in dust, and all the venerable Monuments of Antiquity be devoured by the corroding Teeth of Time, then let this short Character, describing him in his best and fullest Portraiture, remain of him, *viz.* that he was A CHRISTIAN IN COMPLETE ARMOUR.

F I N I S.

